

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 6 December 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In the last several months, false allegations have been made regarding the disclosure of information on the location of minefields in southern Lebanon. In order to clarify the facts relating to this matter, Israel would like to convey the following:

On 24 May 2000, Israeli forces completely withdrew from southern Lebanon in full and confirmed compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). On 29 May 2000, only five days after Israel's withdrawal, Israel Defence Force (IDF) liaison officers held a series of meetings with the senior command of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and transferred all the information available to the IDF, as well as detailed maps previously used by the IDF, regarding the location in southern Lebanon of minefields and areas suspected of containing mines and other explosive devices. This included all information regarding mines or other explosive devices planted by other elements operating in the area. No efforts were spared to assist UNIFIL and to clarify all questions relating, inter alia, to specific map markings.

Upon receiving the Israeli maps and files, the UNIFIL senior command signed official confirmations of transfer of that information.

As is widely known, southern Lebanon has served as a breeding ground for terrorist activities for many years. Throughout this long period, large quantities of mines, booby traps and other devices have been laid by terrorist groups and individual terrorists. Those mines and explosive devices were never marked, mapped or reported, nor were the areas fenced off in order to avoid civilian casualties. Today, these mines and booby traps continue to pose a serious threat to the population of southern Lebanon.

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and in accordance with international law, it is the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon to establish effective control and authority in the area and restore international peace and security to southern Lebanon. Clearly, the failure to fulfil these responsibilities with respect, inter alia, to minefields, endangers the civilian population in the area.

Israel remains willing to assist and cooperate with UNIFIL should any further clarifications be required with regard to the information it has transferred.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yehuda Lancry
Permanent Representative

